

## **Free and Open Access to Data/Information A Commercial Viewpoint**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The public/private partnership that exists in the delivery of weather information and services in the United States continues to evolve, and the traditional roles of each sector will continue to change. The collection and processing of environmental data that was once the exclusive role of the public sector has become an increasing product of private industry. As the value of this information continues to increase and as more strongly capitalized private sector organizations join the weather industry, this trend will continue and is likely to accelerate.

Private industry investment in collecting and processing environmental data will be made in order to achieve competitive advantage. In many cases, this will require exclusive use of the information. Obviously, any form of exclusivity conflicts with free and open access to the information.

Two important questions that arise from this issue are:

- What are the financial models that provide the return on investment required by private industry and at the same time permit free and open access?
- How does this dynamic impact the roles of the public and private sectors in the weather services partnership of the future?